THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI ANAND SHARMA): (a) and (b) India and France signed a Declaration on the Development of Nuclear Energy for Peaceful Purposes during the visit of President Jacques Chirac on February 20,2006 which underlines the need to develop international cooperation in promoting the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. This declaration envisages that such cooperation will be 'in accordance with their respective international obligations and commitments'. The international cooperation in civilian nuclear items and technology is controlled by the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) guidelines, which at present preclude such cooperation with India. France is a member of the NSG. As such the cooperation with France would be possible only after NSG Guidelines are suitably adjusted.

(c) and (d) As part of the India-US understanding on civilian nuclear cooperation as stated in July 18, 2005, the US has undertaken to work with its partners in the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) for adjusting its Guidelines to enable full civilian cooperation between India and the international community. The Government has also actively engaged with a broad range of NSG member states including France with a view to seek their support for enabling international civilian nuclear cooperation with India. France has expressed support for India's position.

SAARC meet in Dhaka

2761. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Prime Minister attended the SAARC meet held in Dhaka in November last;

(b) if so, what decisions were taken there at on the issue of terrorism, protection of Inter-SAARC investments;

(c) what other resolutions were adopted at the Summit; and

(d) the steps taken and being taken by Government in the light thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) Yes, Sir. The Prime Minister attended the Thirteenth SAARC Summit held on November 12-13, 2005 in Dhaka.

(b) cooperation in counter terrorism was a major theme at the Summit. There is a strong condemnation of terrorism in the Dhaka Declaration and

a renewed commitment to eliminate this scourge For the first time, there was a clear reference to avoid double standards in tackling this challenge. The Summit also recognized the need to take the process of regional economic integration by expanding the scope of SAFTA (Agreement on South Asia Free Trade Area) to include trade in services, enhanced investment and harmonized standards. It decided to encourage trade-creating investment in member states. An Agreement on Promotion and Protection of Investment is under discussion.

(c) The Dhaka Declaration adopted at the Summit included, *inter-alia,* regional cooperation in the areas of trade, commerce, poverty alleviation, social challenges, natural disasters, people-to-people contact and cultural cooperation. Other issues included in the Declaration related to SAARC's external profile and linkages, and to strengthening its institutional mechanisms and the funding mechanisms to undertake various proposals.

(d) The Government is pursuing the proposals agreed at the Summit in close consultation with other SAARC member states.

Agreement signed with USA

†2762. SHRI LALIT KISHORE CHATURVEDI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the agreement with the United States of America signed on the use of atomic energy; and

(b) whether this agreement would not adversely affect the security system of the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI ANAND SHARMA): (a) No agreement has been signed with the United States of America on the use of atomic energy.

(b) Does not arise.

Trans-Asia Railway link

2763. SHRI RAJEEV SHUKLA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that representatives from seven Asian countries including India had earlier discussed setting up of a Trans-Asian Railway

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.